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THE GODDESS NATURE IN EARLY PERIODS

No general study has been made of the goddess or allegorical figure Nature. Yet an examination into its origin and its development is of much significance to those interested in many diverse aspects of modern literature. To the philosopher it presents a notable case of the influence of Plato, even to the nineteenth century. It throws a strong light on the application of ethical principles to moral practices in classic times and in the Middle Ages, as well as later. The deistic doctrine that Nature is good had a far-reaching effect on life in the eighteenth century and the nineteenth. To those interested in the treatment and the appreciation of Nature in literature and art, a survey offers a substantial background. To those who would trace the history of literary forms and genres, it presents a figure conspicuous in allegory. To the various critics who hold important the hypotheses and opinions of Hooker, Hobbes, Cudworth, Berkeley, Hume, Kant, Mill, Huxley, and Spencer, or of Rousseau, Wordsworth, Shelley, Goethe, Emerson, Thoreau, Tennyson, and Arnold, a knowledge of the earlier position of the figure Nature should be of no little value.

The present study¹ is an introduction to the problem. It shows the origin of the figure among the Greeks and representative conceptions of it among the Hellenes and the Romans. It then traces the history with the chief Latin writers up to the Renaissance. But the employment of Nature in the vernaculars of the Middle Ages and the literature of modern times can be treated only in other papers.

I

The personification Nature is so familiar to-day that a definition of it is unnecessary. Sufficient explanations are accessible in the large dictionaries. Nevertheless I should point out that the Greek word for nature is *φύσις*, signifying growth; the Latin, *natura*.

The conception that *Physis* represented, arose long before its actual personification in literature or theological deifications under the specific name. It was gradually defined by the pre-

¹ It is based on a portion of a doctoral dissertation, *Natura as an Allegorical Figure*, presented at Harvard University, 1918.

Socratic philosophers.² The general idea existed in the myths of the poets. The work of the philosophers, therefore, was a critical reaction against mythology. Their tendency was to contract the theory of the universe to something that appeared more certain than an attribution of events to benevolent or malevolent gods. The principle of causation was their resultant hypothesis. They dropped the personal element, and confined the cause of phenomena to a few material elements such as water, earth, air, and fire, or even to water alone. These causative elements were not always so obviously material as is earth, for some of the thinkers believed that they could avoid difficulties in their theories by naming as the causes of things principles more abstract than earth, namely, change or rest or mind. In the last they approached a shift in point of view. Whereas their other explanations faced toward the cause, without considering to what end the cause led, that explanation wherein mind appeared entailed the notion of a plan or design in the universe and led to the finding of a purposive attitude in it, similar to a common state of the human mind.³

The time had come for a reconciliation of the seemingly contradictory attitudes of the myth-makers and the scientists. Such in part was the contribution of Plato. His views on this problem came down to the Middle Ages most directly in the Chalcidius translation and commentary on the fragment of the *Timaeus*.⁴ If Plato's conceptions of Nature are not quite the most important ethically, they are the most important in the tradition of Natura as an allegorical figure. They dominated the philosophic Latin poets of the twelfth century, and hence

² Cf. the valuable monograph, "Περὶ φύσεως, A Study of the Conception of Nature among the Pre-Socratics," W. A. Heidel, *Proceedings of the Amer. Acad. of Arts and Sciences*, XLV, no. 4, pp. 73-133. Heidel cites Hippocrates and others. See H. Diels, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, Berlin, 1913, for related passages: Epicharmos, I, p. 121; Heraclitus, I, p. 101; quotation, Arist. *de mundo*, 5.396b7 (p. 79); Parmenides, pp. 149, 160-2; Empedocles, pp. 229-39, 248-50, 256-7, 270.—An excellent work for consultation on the history of philosophy is *History of Medieval Philosophy*, M. de Wolf., trans. P. Coffey, New York, 1909.

³ Cf. Aristotle's account in *Metaphysica*, A 3-10.

⁴ Cf. *Platonis Timaeus Interprete Chalcidio cum ejusdem commentario*, ed. J. Wrobel, Leipsic, 1876; *The Timaeus of Plato*, R. D. Archer-Hind, London, 1888, with a good introduction.

influenced celebrated works in French, such as the *Roman de la Rose*, in Italian, such as Brunetto Latini's *Il Tesoretto*, and in English, such as poems by Chaucer, his contemporaries, and his successors.

Because of Plato's position, therefore, I shall outline his obscure and somewhat inconsistent theory of the universe. The world about us shows evidence of a colossal plan; hence there must have been a designer. The architect was God, who, that he might bring order into the universe, conceived in image of himself the immaterial world-soul (34-5), τὸν κόσμον ἑῶν ἐμψυχον ἔννοον (30b). To us it is apparent through its body of corporeal material, which physically embodies the divine idea and is composed of the four elements. The functions of the great animal are the motions of the heavens, which envisage time, the image of eternity. The celestial bodies are gods, to whom God has assigned the task of making the imperfect man from the elements, as He himself had made them. In sum, there are four divisions in Plato's cosmological theory:

- I. A God creative and employing agencies to perform his plan.
- II. Agents performing the details of His plan.
- III. An obscure, pre-orderly universe out of which order came.
- IV. Man, one product of God's agents.

A similar division occurred with Aristotle. Matter,⁵ which is Plato's pre-orderly universe, is an indeterminate potentiality of order. When acted upon, it becomes form; that is, it is determinate and individualized; it may appear as man. It takes shape of actuality under the operation of an agent, the efficient cause. Its development is directed toward the final cause, the great design or the source of the design, God, who is neither form nor matter.

To each of these four divisions—primal matter, form, the efficient causal agent, and God the final cause, the one word *physis* may be applied. If we take a pantheistic view, and regard the four divisions as limitations in the way of regarding the pantheos, we may call the whole *physis*. On the other hand, we may approach the attitudes of Plato and Aristotle, and consider the aspects as actually separate entities. But the diversity in the meaning of *Physis*, or Nature, indicates how the word may signify a personification, an agent, a passive

⁵ Cf. *Metaphys.*, Z 3 ff., H 1-3, D22, A1-4.

recipient of action, a divinity.⁶ We have the idea of *natura naturans* and *natura naturata*.

The successors to Plato and Aristotle often treated eclectically the theories of their masters. Thus the Peripatetic school moved toward naturalism, to a denial of final cause and to a representing of God as the principle of growth in the universe. The Epicureans held the world to be one which appeals to the senses, which was made by the motion of atoms, and which was the object of no final purpose or divine interference. Even the soul was corporeal. The Stoics, in contrast, though considering the universe to be wholly corporeal, believed it to be a great unit having a two-fold aspect of action. These correspond to *natura naturans* and *natura naturata*. Since the development of matter is fixed, the Stoic ethical doctrine is a cosmic determinism. Nevertheless they believed that man should live in accord with the laws of Nature. In fact Roman law held that there is a natural law of goodness to which people should conform.

⁶ Aristotle's definitions are in *Metaphys.* D 4; cf. Δ6-10. Here he influenced the later Middle Ages, as Albert the Great. Other notable sets of definitions occurred in *Liber de Persona et Duabus Naturis*, formerly attributed to Boethius, *Consolatio Philosophiae*, R. Peiper, Lipsiae, 1871—*Contra Eyttychen et Nestorium*, cap. I; *Isidori . . . Etymologiarum*, W. M. Lindsay, Oxonii, 1911, XI, i; the spurious *Liber de definitionibus* of Athanasius, Migne, *Patrologica Graeca*, XXVIII; Anastatius, Migne, *P. G.* LXXXIX, *Viae Dux*, cols. 55, 57; Rhaban Maur, *De Universo*, Migne, *P. Latina*, CXI, Lib. VI, col. 137; Alanus de Insulis, Migne, *P. L.*, CCX, *Liber in Distinctionibus Dictionum Theologicalium*, col. 871; also, *Sermo de Spiritu Sancto*, col. 221D; cf. *Contra Haereticos*, I, xl, col. 345D; (see M. Baumgartner, *Die Philosophie des Alanus de Insulis*, Münster, 1896); Hugo de St. Victor, Migne CLXXVI, *De Bestiis et Aliis Rebus*, III, lix (col. 119); Migne CLXXVII, *Eruditio didasculi*, I, xi (cols. 748-9); Albert the Great (1206-1280), *Opera omnia*, A. Borgnet, Parisiis, IV, 1890, paraphrases of Aristotle, *Physica*, II, i-iii, VIII, i, 8; *De Generatione et Corruptione*, II, iii, 6; cf. *Alberts des Grossen Verhältnis zu Plato*, P. L. Gaul, Münster, 1913, pp. 63-73, 92-96; his pupil Thomas Aquinas, *Opera omnia*, ed. prepared for Leo XIII, 12 vols., Rome, 1882-1903; *Scriptores*, G. Estii, 2 vols., Parisiis, 1838,—*Summa Theologiae*, I, ii, 10, 1c; *Script. in 4 lbr. a Sententiarum Magis. P. Lombardi*, II, 37, 1 1c; *Quaest. Disputae de Veritate*, 22, 5c; again, *Script.* III, 5, 1, 2c; *Summa Theol.* III, 2, 1c; *Liber Dionysii De Divinibus Nominibus*, 4, 21 (cf., however, *Sum. Theol.*, *Quaest.* XIII, xiii, art. 8); *S.T.*, I, *Quaest.* XLIV, art. 3, and cf. *Quaest.* XLV; G. Boccaccio, *Περὶ θεολογίας θεῶν*, Basileae, 1802, pp. 2, 3, 4. There is little in Vincent of Beauvais: Vincentius Bellovacensis, *Speculum Naturale*, 2 vols., Strassburg, Johann Mentellin?, 1473, II, xviii.

In two other schools, the four-fold Platonic division of the aspects and labors was more clearly maintained,—that of Philo the Jew,⁷ who lived at the beginning of the Christian era, and that influenced by him and associated with Plotinus, a Neo-Platonist of the third century. Both were products of the Alexandrian civilization. To Philo God was perfect, but matter was imperfect. He acted on the world through the agency of emanating forces. The primary force was Logos, which was the Wisdom of God, even if not God himself. Philo is significant not only for his doctrine but for his allegorical method, and for the reason that he affected the early Christian writers. The school of Neo-Platonism also influenced the Fathers, as in the works of Plotinus⁸ and of Dionysius the Areopagite,⁹ who was once thought to be an authentic, speculative disciple of the Apostle Paul and whose *Divine Names* was familiar to medieval philosophers. The four-fold division of their philosophy appeared as a God remote and emanating though a descending scale of agent forces (in Dionysius, the famous angels' hierarchy) and through matter to the sensible world and individuals. The Intelligence, or World-soul, arose from God knowing self; from Intelligence came ideas; when it contemplated ideas, the sensible world in turn arose, and the particular souls. At the same time it made matter, and by combining matter with souls made corporeal beings.

Such is the encyclopedic and philosophical basis for Nature during the Greek and Latin period. I now turn to other aspects of her in the Greek time, such as the literary, artistic, and religious representations. One of the earliest employments of Physis as a figure of personal qualities was in a Hellenic bas-relief, Archelaos' *Apotheosis of Homer* (ca. 150 B.C.).¹⁰ Physis is a child among mature figures like Zeus, Homer, Apollo, Chronos, Sophia, Mneme, and others. In literature occurred

⁷ *Philonis Alexandrini Opera*, L. Cohn, P. Wendland, S. Reiter, Berolini, 1896–1915, 6 vols.; cf. *Philo-Judaus*, J. Drummond, London, 1888.

⁸ *Enneades*, R. Volkmann, Lipsiae, 1883–4.

⁹ Migne, *P. G.*, III.

¹⁰ Now in the British Museum. Cf. *Ausführliches Lexikon der griechischen u. römischen Mythologie*, Leipzig, 1884, p. 3266; article on Archelaos, *Denkmäler des klassischen Altertums*, A. Baumeister, München und Leipzig, I, 1885; *Gazette archéologique*, 1887, S. Reinach, pp. 132–7.

a number of interesting epigrams,¹¹ several of which apply to the celebrated Cow of the statuary Myron, wherein Techne (Art) and Physis vied. Equally representative of the use of Physis is the tenth Orphic hymn,¹² which strings together many epithets of the goddess mother of all. A combination of literary decoration and religious mysticism appeared in the allegorical epic, *Dionysiaca* (ca. 400 A.D.) by Nonnus of Panopolis.¹³

II

Meanwhile the Romans had made use of the figure, Natura. For the present study, the significance of their philosophy is not originality, but its function as a vehicle for Greek methods and thought. My treatment of the philosophers will therefore be brief, with a view to indicating merely typical opinions of leading schools.

Seneca supported the Stoic doctrine. From his writings may be pieced together his explanation of Natura so as to give the two phases, the physical and the moral. The principal passage¹⁴ finds that the terms universe, Jupiter, Natura, Fate,

¹¹ *Anthologica Graeca* (Palatine), F. Jacobs, 4 vols., Leipsic, 1813-7, II, 9.738, 793, etc.; *Anthologia Planudea*, nos. 116, 302, 373; cf. *Epigrammatum Anthologia Palatina*, F. Dübner, II, Paris, 1872. Cf. *The Greek Anthology*, W. R. Paton, London and New York, 1916, I, pp. 10, 328.

¹² *Orphica*, ed. E. Abel, Lipsiae, 1885.

¹³ *Nonnus Panopolitanus*, ed. A. Ludwig, 2 vols., Lipsiae, 1909; *Les Dionysiaques*, de Marcellus, Paris, 1856. The passages are II, 650 ff., XLI, 51 ff., 97 ff. See Preisendanz, *Philologus*, LXVII, pp. 474-5, on Georgios Pisides (640), *Hexaameron*, V., 257 ff., and on a reference to Leo Sternbach, *Wien. Stud.* 13; Pis. IV, 64. Preisendanz adds citations in supplementing M. Gothein, "der Gottheit lebendiges Kleid," *Archiv f. Rel. wiss.*, IX, pp. 337 ff. He refers to C. Wessely, *Griechische Zauberpapyrus von Paris und London*, *Denkschriften d. Akad. d. Wissenschaften zu Wien* (Phil.-Hist. Classe 36) 1888, V. 2831 ff. 2917 ff. 3231; also Wessely's *Neue griechische Papyri* (D. A. W. W., 42, 1893) V. 519; G. Parthey, *Zwei griechische Zauberpapyri des Berliner Museums*, Berlin, 1866, I, 310. Other citations to add are: Philodemus (Epicurean ca. 58 B.C.), *Herkulanische Studien*, vol. 2, I, p. 79, T. Gomperz, Leipsic, 1866; Artemidorus (time of Hadrian), *Onirocriticon*, R. Hercher, Leipsic, 1864, Lib. I, 6, 34; II, 39; III, 41; *Papiri Greci e Latini* (Pub. d. Soc. Ital. per la Ricerca d. Papiri G. e L. in Egitto) Firenze, 1912-, 41.10, 21; 157.39; 236.32; 252.27.

¹⁴ *L. A. Senecae Naturales Quaestiones*, A. Gercke, Lipsiae, 1907, II, 45; *De Beneficiis*, C. Hosius, 2d ed., Lipsiae, 1914, IV, vii. 1; cf. V, viii, 5, 6; *N.Q.* III, 27.2; 30.1.

Providence, are interchangeable. Natura's law in the physical world is paralleled in the moral world; hence man, who only of creatures can do wrong, should live according to Nature.¹⁵ Natura perforce is good, and the law of conduct requires us to abide by her injunctions. Despite teachings of the initial or early depravity of man, the doctrine has survived to the present day. It was approved even by some of the Christian Fathers, though they were inclined to emphasize the fall in the Garden of Eden. It appeared frequently in the Middle Ages and in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The disposition of the Academic Cicero was eclectic, but he stood nearest to the Stoics. His service lay chiefly in his exposition of the different schools of philosophy. He pointed out the educative functions of the benignant Natura.¹⁶

Such a dogma was opposed by the Epicurean Lucretius. Natura was by no means perfect in results. He found little evidence of a plan in the universe.¹⁷

The Elder Pliny in his *Natural History*¹⁸ stood between the Stoic and the Epicurean views. Natura, as with our modern Huxley, is sometimes benevolent, sometimes malevolent. Moreover, she indicates the subtlest intelligence. Though man tries occasionally to rival her, he can not succeed and attempts unwisely what no other creature would.

Meanwhile the writings of the Christians began to appear. They did not in general employ the figure of Nature in their speculations. I shall, therefore, speak of but a few of the men of influence. It was barely employed by Tertullian, Basil the Great, Chrysostom, and Augustine. In Ambrose's *Hexaemeron*, an encyclopedic commentary on Scripture, the references

¹⁵ "Secundum naturam vivere." See *Epist. Morales*, O. Hense, Lipsiae, 1898, V.4; XLI, 9, and so on; *Dialogi*, E. Hermes, Lipsiae, 1905, "De Otio," v. 1; "De Ira," I, iii ff.; *Epist.* LXVI, 32 ff. Cf. Juvenal, XIV, 321.

¹⁶ *De Natura Deorum*, J. B. Mayor, Cambridge, 1883, vol. II, xxxiv. Many passages personify Natura. For her and Fortune in C. and Lucretius, see W. W. Fowler, *Roman Ideas of Deity*, London, 1914, pp. 47 ff., 73-4.

¹⁷ *De Rerum Natura*, W. A. Merrill, New York, 1907, II, 167 ff., V, 181 ff., I, 1021 ff. Cf. I, 6 ff., 328; III, 931 ff., V, 1361 ff. Merrill, p. 575, narrows the personification too closely. L. is like the Pre-Socratics.

¹⁸ C. Mayhoff, Leipsic, 5 vols. 1897-1906, VII, 1; I, 316; II, 1, 5; XI, 1-3; XVII, 14, 26; XVIII, 60-8; XIX, 20; XXII, 56; end of XXXVII.

indicate that she is against evil.¹⁹ In other writers, however, appeared objections to the attitude that God is Natura or Logos, terms which were used as equivalent by Philo and many philosophers. Most vigorous opposition to the equation came from the author of the *Clementines*, or *Recognitions*, attributed to Clement of Rome, and from Lactantius. The former insisted that God be not confused with either Nature or Reason.²⁰ A similar position was held by Lactantius in *The Divine Institutes*.²¹

Though these men were unusual theologians, they were hardly great philosophers. Later a great philosopher did appear, but his influence was confined mostly to his own time. This was John the Scot, or Erigena, who lived in the time of Charles the Bald. Though he translated into Latin Dionysius' noted work, he drew up his own system in *De Divisione Naturae*, *περὶ φύσεως μερισμοῦ*.²² It is an attempt to reconcile philosophy and theology, but the attitude is primarily philosophic. It shows the four Platonic divisions:

- I. Natura uncreated and creating—God the unknowable Father
- II. Natura created and creating—God the Son, the Logos, knowing self
- III. Natura created and uncreating—Being realized in time, through the Holy Spirit
- IV. Natura uncreated and uncreating—God the ultimate term of the universe (Aristotle's final cause)

One may discern in detail the creative God and His agents, a group of elements, and man.

Over two hundred years later, the Platonic cosmology again became prominent partly because of Abelard (1079-1142)²³

¹⁹ Migne, *P.L.*, XIV, cols. 171A, 206C, 215C, 220A, 236C, 252A.

²⁰ Migne, *P.G.*, I, col. 1388 B-C, or Bk. VIII, ch. 34, p. 174, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, A. Roberts and J. Donaldson, Buffalo, 1887-96, VIII.

²¹ Migne, *P.L.*, VI, 436 B-C, 437A, 441A; or *A-N.F.*, work cited, VII, pp. 97-9. Cf. Migne, 740C, 741A-B, 742A, or *A-N.F.*, p. 196.—I shall not here show how the doctrines of Boethius' *Consolatio Philosophiae* reflect under other names than Natura the four-fold division of Plato.

²² Migne, CXXII, cols. 439 ff.

²³ Cf. *P.A. Opera*, V, Cousin, Parisiis, II, 1859, *Theologica Christiana*, i, pp. 379-89; *Introductio ad Theologiam*, pp. 32-40, 48; also *Ouvrages inédits d'Abélard*, V. Cousin, Paris, 1836, *Dialectica*, pp. 475-6.

and particularly because of the famous school at Chartres. William of Conches (died 1154) and Gilbert de la Porrée (1070-1154) were humanistic Platonists who had studied under the great teacher Bernard of Chartres (died about 1130) and who were interested in cosmology. Their master, the chief of the school, was far more important than they were or was his younger brother Thierry of Chartres.²⁴ Bernard's relation to Plato appears from the account by a pupil, John of Salisbury, in his celebrated *Metalogicus*. With him, God was the supreme, eternal reality. Ideas were the prototypes or forms present to Him, the infinite Intelligence. When combined with that matter which He had made out of the primal matter, they composed the world of sense about us. Somehow there had been once a chaotic mass, *materia primordialis*. Natura Bernard personified after the Platonic conception of a world-soul, including within it interior beings like man. Thus again came the four-fold division,—God, agents, primal matter, and man. The philosophic material was ready for the great allegorical impulse of the twelfth century. Bernardus Silvester of Tours, who studied at the school of Chartres, was about to turn humanism, encyclopedism, and philosophy into prose and verse after the manner of Boethius.²⁵

III

By the time of Seneca and Pliny, Natura had become a common personification to adorn literature. An important case is Statius's²⁶ use of it in epic, because thus the poet presumably stimulated the writers of the Middle Ages. On one occasion, Pietas addresses Natura; on another, Capaneus' wife apostrophizes her. A peculiarity of Statius was the frequency with which he said that Natura adapted the ground for military operations or other purposes, for instance, in the famous descrip-

²⁴ See A. Clerval, *Les Écoles des Chartres au Moyen-Âge*, Paris, 1895, pp. 248-61.

²⁵ For those who prefer to continue at once with Bernardus Silvester, the intervening section (III) on earlier literary treatment in Latin is not absolutely necessary. The discussion is resumed in section IV.

²⁶ *P.P. Stati Thebais*, H. W. Garrod, Oxonii, 1906; II, 501; VII, 447; VIII, 330; X, 88; XI, 466, 607; XII, 561, 645. Cf. *P.P. Stati Silvae*, A. Klotz, Lipsiae, 1911, I, 2.156, 271; 3.17; 6.58; II, 1.34, 83; 2. 15, 52; 4.17; III, 4.76; IV, 3. 135; V, 3.71; 5.22.

tion of the house of Somnus. But perhaps the chief employment was in the exaggerative passage in which the poet wrote that Natura had never before given such strength and courage to so small a man.²⁷ Specimens of this type had appeared among the Greeks, but here we have a direct impetus to the Old French and other medieval writers who exalted the beauty of women.

In the same tradition followed the notable contemporary of Nonnus of Panopolis, Claudianus,²⁸ who like Nonnus had an Alexandrian training. Besides employing Natura in the simplest personifications, Claudianus endowed her with more of the attributes familiar to us in the plastic conceptions of the Greeks regarding their divinities. Natura of course gave her physical or mental presents to her creatures. She was associated with some of the interests of love. In two passages, she appeared as an agent of Zeus. Both tell us something of her surroundings as well as her relation to the rest of the universe and especially to the Olympic pantheon. According to the *Gigantomachia*,²⁹ Terra, out of jealousy at the position of her sons the Titans, plotted against the gods of Olympus. In return Jupiter summoned the other divinities to plan against her efforts. Then Natura opposed Terra, and feared lest her master Jupiter fare the worse for the struggle. In the other passage, in *De Raptu Proserpinae*,³⁰ she took part in an emergency. After Pluto had carried off Proserpina, Ceres abandoned her devotion to agriculture and sought for her daughter, with the result that plants and other life for the support of people grew no longer and the world was becoming a waste. Accordingly Natura went to Jupiter, and persuaded him to interfere in the affair between Pluto and Ceres. Claudianus in another passage gave a more definite impression of Natura and of her surroundings. This case, which is in the *Second*

²⁷ *Thebais*, VI, 845-6.

²⁸ *Claudii Claudiani Carmina*, T. Birt, Berolini, 1892 (Monumenta Germaniae Historica, A.A., X): *De Bello Pollentino sive Gothico*, 221; 525-6; *In Rufinum*, I, 215 f. II, 156; *Phoenix*, 62 ff.; *Nilus*, 31; *Aponus*, 33 f.; *De Torpedine*, 5-8; *Magnes*, 38-9; *Panegyricus de Quarto Consulatu Honorii*, 183; *Panegy. de Tert. Cons. Hon.*, 106; *Ebithalamium de Nuptiis Hon. Augusti*, 323.

²⁹ Birt, work cited, p. 344, ll. 61 ff.

³⁰ Birt, work cited, III, 33 ff. Cf. Guillaume de Machaut's *Le Jugement dou Roy de Navarre* (ca. 1349), *Oeuvres*, ed. E. Hoepffner, Paris, 1908-11, I, pp. 137 ff.

Panegyric on the Consulship of Stilicho, seems to have exercised a strong influence on the writings of Bernardus Silvester and other writers of the twelfth century, such as those of Alanus de Insulis and Jean de Hauteville. I quote a portion:

Est ignota procul nostraeque impervia menti,
Vix adeunda deis, annorum squalida mater,
Immensi spelunca aevi, quae tempora vasto
Suppeditat revocatque sinu. Complectitur antrum,
Omnia qui placido consumit numine, serpens
Perpetuumque viret squamis caudamque reductam
Ore vocat tacito relegens exordia lapsu.
Vestibuli custos vultu longaeva decoro
Ante fores Natura sedet, cunctisque volantes
Dependent membris animae . . . ³¹

To be sure, these details about Natura and her home are vague and meagre, when compared with those of Alanus in *De Planctu Naturae*, but they probably spurred on the satirist of the twelfth century. Moreover, they show the allegorical method which had been used for eight hundred years and was still to triumph in Boethius' *Consolatio* and in the works of the later Middle Ages.

In the early medieval period appeared less important uses of Natura. Thus the answer to a riddle attributed to Aldhelm (about 639-709) is Natura.³² Another instance occurred in a pretty elegy by Alcuin (735-804)³³ on the loss of his nightin-

³¹ *De Consulatu Stilichonis*, II, 424 ff.

³² T. Wright, *The Anglo-Latin Satirical Poets and Epigrammatists of the Twelfth Century*, London, 1872, 2 vols., II, p. 538; cf. incidentally *Sancti Aldhelmi Opera*, J. A. Giles, Oxonii, 1844, *Etymologiae*, V, iv, "jus naturale"; VIII, vi, *φύσις* = natura.

I have not attempted to collect all cases in earlier Latin. It is a commonplace. Typical cases are: Horace (see *A Concordance of the Works of Horace*, L. Cooper, Washington, D.C.) *Ser.* I. l. 50, 88, 2.74, 111, 124; 3.36, 113-7 (Reason, not Nature, distinguishes between wrongs); 5.102; *Epist.* I, 10.24; 18, 100. Ovid, *Metam.* I, 21; III, 159; IX, 758; X, 245, 304, 330; XI, 235; XV, 63, 68, 253. C.S.A. Sidonius (ca. 431-489), P. Mohr, Lipsiae, 1895, *Carmina*, I, 1 (Natura placed young Jove above the stars); II, 12, 115; XXII, 223; *Epist.* I, ii, 1, 2, 3; V, vii, 6; VII, xiv, 3. *D.M. Ausonii Mosella*, H. de LaVille de Miromont, Bordeaux, 1889, 11. 384-5; *D.M.A. Opuscula*, R. Peiper, Lipsiae, 1886, *De Rosis Nascentibus*, p. 411. Boethius, *Cons. Philos.*, work cited, II, prose 2, prose 6; III, meter II.

³³ *Alcuini Carmina* in *Monumenta Ger. Histor.*, *Poetae Latini*, I, E.Dümmeler, 1881, no. XLI, pp. 274-5.

gale. The author reproached man for being of the creatures of Natura the least in accord with her.

Centuries later, the collection *Carmina Burana*³⁴ offered examples of the personification often like those in Old French, when Natura gave gifts, taught, flowered, ordered, blessed, judged, created. The longest case, however, was a sensuous song with a cosmological introduction quite in the spirit of the wandering clerk. It has a touch of learning, a play of fancy, knowledge of a woman's contrary qualities, and an Horatian appreciation of humor.³⁵ The poem expressed the obverse of the seriousness of Bernardus Silvester and the morality of Alanus.

Closer to the solemn tradition of Natura, perhaps influenced by the school of Chartres or Alanus and certainly by Claudianus is a passage in Gautier de Châtillon's *Alexandreis*. This portion of the poem shows Natura interested in the career of a great man.

The tenth and last book begins with her grieving over the power and ambition of Alexander. She is discovered at work upon the hyle, forming figures. Then, veiled, she goes to the lower world. The elements yield her a path and rise before their own artificer, and other similar phenomena occur. She directs everything not to exceed bounds. After passing the Vices, she finds in a fiery region for criminal souls Leviathan, mixer of fires of perpetual death. She informs him that Alexander aspires to go to the sources of the Nile and to Paradise, and unless Leviathan shall look out, to Chaos. Straightway he promises aid to the uttermost and calls a council. There he speaks against such an audacious man, fearful lest he come to dominate hell. Proditio (ll. 140 ff.) goes off in his service, to procure Alexander's death by poison.

Thus Gautier, like Alanus and Jean de Hauteville, portrayed Natura as opposed to the excesses of man. He reflected also the literature current on cosmology, as is shown by his history of the world from the state of hyle³⁶ and the reference here.

³⁴ J. A. Schmeller, 3d. ed., Breslau, 1894, pp. 22, 69, 74, 121, 157, 164, 185, 205, 213.

³⁵ Work cited, no. 40, pp. 129 ff.; also in *Early Mysteries*, T. Wright, London, 1838, pp. 111-2. *M.P. Gualtheri ab Insulis di Castellione Alexandreis*, F.A.W. Müldener, Lipsiae, 1863; cf. A. Christensen, *Das Alexanderlied* Walthers von Châtillon, Halle, 1905, pp. 89-90; ch. I, he dates poem ca. 1178-82.

³⁶ IV, 180 ff.

The suggestion for the allegorical passage has been a subject for discussion. Ivančić³⁷ thought that the journey was taken from the Alecto-Juno scene in the *Aeneid*, VII, 324 ff. Christensen, however, held that since Gautier knew Lucan, and since Natura only could stop Alexander's terrible career (*Pharsalia*, X, 39), the hint came from the writer on the civil war. The source is probable, but confirmatory influences may surely have been Claudianus and the great literary allegorists of the twelfth century from Bernardus Silvester on. The force of their authority will be apparent from the following sections.³⁸

IV

About 1145-1153 Bernardus Silvester wrote *De Mundi Universitate*,³⁹ a work long in vogue as a text treating in two books respectively the Megacosmos, or world, and the Microcosmos, or man. Here we have for the first time more than an address of Natura to man, more than activity as a creator, more than her brief participation in narrative as a complainant. With other allegorical figures she takes part in a considerable action. I give a brief summary of the plot:

³⁷ Citation by Christensen, pp. 88-9 from J. Ivancic, *Wie hat Walther von Castiglione Vergil nachgeahmt?*, Mitterburg, 1878, p. 11.

³⁸ I have assembled a few of the instances of personification in Latin of this general period. Nearly all the examples in the *Carmina Burana* are cited also in *Über d. poetische Verwertung d. Natur u. ihrer Erscheinungen in d. Vagantenliedern u. im deutschen Minnesang*, K. Marold, *Z. f. deut. Philol.*, XXIII, pp. 3-5. See in addition *Beiträge z. Kunde d. lateinischen Literatur d. Mittelalters*, J. Werner, 2d ed., Aarau, 1905: Versus de Geminis Languentibus, 137, pp. 56 ff.; Passio s. Agnetis virginis, 155, pp. 65 ff., 11.10-11; p. 203. *De Carminibus Latinis*, A. Zingerle, Oeniponti, 1880, 84, p. 118, 11.9-10. *Poésies inédits du moyen âge*, E. duMeril, Paris, 1854, pp. 253, 264, 410; 429-30 (describing Alda's beauty); *Poésies populaires latines du moyen âge*, duMeril, Paris, 1847, pp. 233, 425. *Dicta Catonis*, G. Némethy, Budapestini, 1895, pp. 20, 25, 40. Alexander Neckham, *De Naturis Rerum*, ed. T. Wright, London, 1863, pp. 72, 112, 119, 121, 210; in same vol., his *De Laudibus Divinae Sapientiae*, pp. 382, 386, 387, 398, 400, 407, 422, 423, 428, 429, 456, 465, 466, 473, 480, 484, 486, 488, 489, 494, 496, 499. Migne, 171, Hildebert of Tours, de ornatu mundi, cols. 1235-8, 119-10; Marbod, col. 1718. F. Petrarch, *Opere Latini*, ed. L. M. Capelli and R. Bessone, Torino, 1904, *Africa*, VII, 530. P. Abelardi Opera, work cited, I, 1849, p. 302. *Thomas-Lexikon*, L. Schütz, 2d ed., Paderborn, 1895, pp. 514-5. John of Salisbury, *Opera Omnia*, J. A. Giles, Oxonii, 1848, V, *Entheticus*, 601 ff., 625-6.

³⁹ Ed. C. S. Barach and J. Wrobel, Innsbruck, 1876. Bernardus Silvester should not be confused with Bernard of Chartres.

At the very beginning of the narrative, Natura complains to Nous, the Providence of God, about the confusion of the primal matter with its four formless elements. She desires that a fairer world may exist. Nous approves of the initiative toward order, and proceeds to create the universe by combining the elements. Angels are made, the stars set in the heavens, the winds and living creatures formed, the earth is placed in the midst. Then the poem recites an encyclopedic catalog of the famous mountains, rivers, animals, and plants.

Book II begins with Nous's promise to Natura to make man. Therefore Natura has to seek Urania, queen of the stars, and Physis, who is experienced in all things. Natura, after passing the circles of the heavens, according to the Pythagorean system, comes to the last circle where the aged Pantomorphos presides over all things about to be created. Pantomorphos points out Urania to Natura. Before Natura can declare her errand, Urania prevents her and promises to go with her in search of Physis. Thither they go, bearing the human mind to Physis to give it a body with her aid, and meanwhile permitting it to learn celestial knowledge by its travels. At last they come to a land of paradise, which is suggestive of the garden of Eden, the traditional abode of the first man. There, with her two daughters, they find Physis meditating on the causes of things and the Aristotelian category. Suddenly then Nous appears and the four make man.

The creation of the world and man, Bernardus thus related under the guise of allegory, which represented the philosophical concepts of the Greeks so shaped as to include the brief account in *Genesis*. Likewise he showed the encyclopedic tendency to describe the heavens and the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air in his didactic medieval work, his poetic Hexaameron. But the diffusiveness is not wholly to be condemned. For instance, the study of celestial phenomena by the soul as it is borne to Physis' garden is essentially the Platonic doctrine of recollection.

Not only in such a matter does the poem go back to Platonism, but it retains the four-fold division: God removed, His agents, primeval chaos, and man. Nous represents the divine Intelligence, Providence, or conception of an ordered universe; Natura, the principle of life presiding over matter and awaiting the application of order before it proceeds with material processes; Urania, the principle of divinity for finite application to souls; and Physis, the principle of study of cause and effect, exercised in concrete cases.

The remoteness of God, or Tugaton,⁴⁰ the supreme divinity, who radiates light, everlasting and infinite, is symbolically

⁴⁰ II, v, p. 41.

indicated by the distance which Natura traverses to His heavenly mansion. The long description of natural phenomena which fills the account of her journey does but enhance the impression as to the vastness of the universe and the immense space between earth and Him. From him shines the three-fold light of the Trinity commingling forever.

Most closely related to God is Nous, who is defined in several passages and acts in general as director of affairs over Natura, Urania, and Physis. Unlike Natura she is untroubled by space; as the divine mind wishes, it can appear anywhere without lapse of time,—a capacity symbolized by the sudden appearance of Nous when the others are ready to make man. Natura defines her:

"Vitae viventis imago
Prima noys Deus orta Deo substantia veri,
Consilii tenor aeterni, mihi vera Minerva."⁴¹

In Nous's response to Natura's plea, she defines herself as the science and arbiter of divine will for the definition of things. More symbolically she says that she is God's reason, to whom the first essence gave birth as to another self, not in time, but in eternity.⁴² According to the poet's formal exposition of her, she is the intellect of God in which the images of the living, the eternal ideas, the intelligible world, the cognition of things end as they begin (*praeфинита*). It is as if one viewed in a mirror the genera, species, and individuals of the universe produced from the hyle, or primal matter. Therein are the tearful plights of the poor and the fortunes of kings; the force of arms—and the happier discipline of philosophers; in short, whatever angelic or human reason comprehends. The process as a whole is a flow and emanation.⁴³

If Nous represents divine thought or providence, Natura stands for the principle which, presiding over matter, is desirous of bringing order out of chaos, of substituting harmony for strife. Nous addresses her as daughter, blessed fecundity of her own womb.⁴⁴ It is Nature's petition that causes Nous to set about the creation of the world by a union of immaterial soul

⁴¹ I, i, p. 7, 4 ff.

⁴² I, ii, p. 9, 6 ff.

⁴³ I, ii, p. 13, 152 ff.

⁴⁴ I, ii, p. 9, 3 ff.

and of matter. On the other hand, the fact that she makes a plea and afterward follows *Nous*' directions and receives from her a Table of Fate for guidance in her offices demonstrates that she occupies the position of agent or subordinate, here marked by a cordial filial relation. In one respect *Natura* is the finite in contrast with the infinity of *Nous*, or that which is bound in time and space as against that which is eternal and unconfined; in another respect, she is organic or organized life in opposition to the primal chaos of matter.

In comparing the Table of Fate with the Mirror of Providence assigned to *Urania*, we get more light as to the differences among *Urania*, *Natura*, and *Nous*. We should realize that phraseology overlaps where function does not and that a sharp line of demarcation is impossible. Yet the fields of the personified concepts can be distinguished. Though of great size, the Table of Fate is finite; its non-luminous body is of a gross woody material. In it are visible in colors the appearance of all things as in the Mirror; but in it are imaged especially temporal events which are not to be seen in the Mirror. There may be traced the causes whence peace came to the original chaos, the origin of species, and the influence of the heavens. There is every animal, every kind of thing. Hence *Natura*, the mother of generation, has difficulty in finding man. Concerning him can be discerned the varying fortunes of plebs and monarchs, and all the descent from the Golden Age.⁴⁵ The finiteness of the Table of Fate indicates that though its laws are fixed, something lies beyond it, is superior to it. Since it exhibits the limitations of time and space, it is appropriate to the permanence of natural law and the concreteness of the visible world, and is justly the aid for *Natura*.

The Mirror of Providence, which defines by contrast the limitations of *Natura*, is given to *Urania*. With breadth but without end, its size is more inclusive than that of the Table of Fate. The ideas and examples which exist beyond time have life in it. There are the stars, the life-giving sun, the increase-giving moon, and the genera of all creatures. Accordingly *Urania* has trouble in finding the image of man.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ II, xi, pp. 57-8, 45 ff.

⁴⁶ II, xi, p. 57, 20 ff.

The celestial bodies, it will be recalled, were in the Platonic system divinities associated as agents with the divine ideas. Consequently, they can be fitly assigned to the region under Urania's control. Her function is to study the divine thoughts, the ideas,—a study comprising in part the offices of theology, philosophy, and celestial science. Since she has charge of the human soul and bears it with her in the journey to Physis, she has control over the spiritual world, and wishes to instruct the soul in celestial relations to the affairs of earth.⁴⁷ Therefore she corresponds somewhat to Philosophia in Boethius' *Consolatio*, who instructs man in regard to the differences between Fate and Providence. Yet her association here with Providence precludes her being the equivalent. She is limited by space unlike Nous. Moreover, she is not the same as Philosophia, who treats from the outside Providence and Fate. Urania however, is most intimate with Providence, and leaves Fate to Natura.⁴⁸

Urania and Natura are sisters. The former is said by Nous to be "sedium mearum adsistrix."⁴⁹ Pantomorphos calls her "adsistricem indigetemque caeli,"⁵⁰ saying that Natura will see her "adsistere sideribus inhiantem reditusque stellarum et anfractus temporarios sub numerum et certas observationis regulas colligentem." Urania herself declares to Natura the difficulty she will have in descending from high places.⁵¹

A theological or moral function is given Urania in Nous's discussion of the offices of the three goddesses when they come to the making of the complete man. If the soul is composed from the entelechy and the "edification" of the virtues,⁵² it would seem that Natura is more closely associated with the former since it was formed before we hear of Urania. It is the product of Natura's plea to Nous. On the other hand, the preparation of the body of man out of matter lies closest to Physis.

⁴⁷ II, iv, p. 39, 31 ff.

⁴⁸ The prayers to the Trinity set off these characters from any precise identification with Boethius' Philosophia.

⁴⁹ II, iii, p. 36, 24.

⁵⁰ II, iii, p. 38, 103 ff.

⁵¹ II, iv, p. 39, 15 ff.

⁵² II, xi, p. 56.

Physis⁵³ is nearest to natural science which deals with problems that at the present day concern physics, chemistry, and biology, and which has the attitude of studying cause and effect, as distinguished from purpose. The resemblance to the modern scientist and to the pre-Socratic philosophers is at once apparent. When Natura and Urania arrive at her residence, they find her peacefully meditating on the causes of things and the Aristotelian category of knowledge. She is associated with medical investigations.⁵⁴ Nous gives her the Book of Record, in which are noted the matters of Providence and Fate, not foreseen but at most conjectured on the basis of past experience. Therein are set forth the reason why love is enabled to join diversities; the qualitative distinction of species; and the cause for the different properties and efficacies of vegetables. Amid the many items in the record, Physis finally succeeds in locating man.⁵⁵ Perhaps Physis corresponds to practical science, and Natura and Urania—the latter more closely—correspond to normative science. Her daughters, Theoria and Practica, accord well with the solution I present, despite their derivation from Boethius, who associated them with Philosophia: science combines theory and practice.

From the materials assembled by Urania and Natura, Physis proceeds to make man after the model of the greater world. She places his mind, heart, and liver in conformity with the grander example and endows him with humors and senses. When done, he is both of the earth earthy and of the heaven heavenly.

The detailed discussion above, which supplements the summary of the plot, shows the interest of the allegorical narrative. The ingenious inventions and adaptations of the poet add to the pedagogic palatableness of the information, encyclopedic and philosophic, that the author wished to convey. Small wonder, therefore, that *De Mundi Universitate* was extensively read and studied for a long time and in addition to the more colorful and dramatic narratives of Alanus de Insulis. Chaucer refers to the works of Bernardus as if they were familiar works of learning in his day, over two hundred years later.

⁵³ Compare the old term "physik" for "medicine."

⁵⁴ II, ix, p. 54, 67 ff.

⁵⁵ II, xi, pp. 58-9.

V

Among the minor allegorical devices in *De Mundi Universitate* is the reception of Natura⁵⁶ at the paradise. The shrubs and flowers feel her approach and sympathetically perform their functions of exuding gums and emitting perfumes more profusely than ever,—an appropriate turn to the old method of indicating divine presence. The same phenomenon, described at greater length, occurs on the arrival of Natura as it is related in the allegorical *De Planctu Naturae* by Alanus de Insulis (about 1128-1203).⁵⁷ This cante-fable differs in temper from the preceding. Whereas the former shows humanism by weaving somewhat gracefully into its web phrases or turns of thought reminiscent of classical Latin writers, the *Complaint* exhibits a more independent and vigorous spirit, which is often of great brilliance, though sometimes far too crowded in detail and occasionally grotesque.

The work begins with the author Alanus lamenting the way that man has disobeyed the law of Natura through lust. To him descends a beautiful woman, Natura, at whose approach the natural world increases in vigor and joy and splendor. She is clothed in an extraordinary manner. Her crown depicts the revolution of the heavenly bodies; her garment is an atmosphere that bears all sorts of birds; her mantle is the dwelling-place of fish and denizens of the deep, and her tunic, that of animals; her shoes are adorned with fair flowers. Despite the welcome given her by the natural world, Natura is much grieved. She first comforts Alanus, and then asks him why he has forgotten her benefits, the gifts of the Vicar of God, such as reason and memory. Man, she says, is like the universe in organization; like God, his mind commands; like the agent angels, other qualities of his carry out the orders; like the creatures, members of his body obey. Some things Natura keeps secret from man. On the other hand, man by familiarity with nature loses respect for Natura's law. She herself is the lowly disciple of the Supreme Ruler. He is the maker; she, the made. By his nod alone he orders a thing to exist and it is so. Man is first born by Natura, and is reborn by the might of God. She is ignorant of the mystery of the second birth, because it can be comprehended only through Faith. Natura attains faith through reason, Theologia attains reason by faith. At the close of Natura's long oration, Alanus has courage to address her, in language which recalls that of the Orphic prayer to Physis.

⁵⁶ II, ix, p. 53, 31 ff.

⁵⁷ Migne, CCX, col. 431-482; T. Wright, *Satirical Poets of the Twelfth Century*, (Rolls Series), London, 1872, II, pp. 429-522; translated by D. M. Moffat, New York, 1908. See Baumgartner, work cited. Cf. in general, K. Francke, *Zur Geschichte lateinischer Schulpoesie des XII. u. XIII. Jahrhunderts*, München, 1879, and W. Ganzenmüller, *Das Naturgefühl im Mittelalter*, Leipzig and Berlin, 1914.

Then they converse on the manner evil arose when Venus had become weary of the monotony of Hymen's law and accordingly sinned with Antigamus. Next Natura describes the power of the vices: Intemperance, Pride, Envy, Flattery. During the discourse on lawful love, Alanus receives a mild rebuke from Natura when he displays undue eagerness to hear about Cupid. Finally Hymen comes, followed by Chastity, Temperance, Generosity, and Humility. All express grief at the course affairs have taken, at the fact that man has forsaken them. They decide to call upon Genius to excommunicate the guilty, and Hymen bears the message to him. After an interval passed agreeably with music and further speech, aged Genius arrives in the company of his daughter Truth. This designer of divine plans and images, which Falsehood tries constantly to spoil, pronounces anathema on evil and excess. And the figures fade as Alanus becomes aware of waking.

I now take up in detail, following mostly the order of narrative itself, the exposition of Natura: the physical description of her and her garments, her relation to God, differences between her and Theologia, her nature from Alanus' point of view, her attitude toward him, her duties, and her relations to Venus.

Natura came to the elegiac poet from the inner palace of the impassable world. Hereupon occurs the chief physical description of Natura in literature. Like many medieval descriptions of women, it treats her personal beauties at great length, and in the present case it is followed by an extended allegorical account of her garments and adornments.⁵⁸ The symbolism is most elaborate. But its meaning is usually so plain that I need not explain it. Occasionally Alanus enlivens the portrayal with humor,—an element to which Chaucer could not have been averse while writing his love-poem, *The Parlement of Foules*, and in omitting the description of Nature therein for the reason that Alain had performed the task once for all. And the account of the stones in the crown is nearly an early *Ethics of the Dust*.

After her reception,⁵⁹ Natura arouses the stupefied poet, and reproves him for not recognizing her,⁶⁰ "Dei auctoris vicaria," who had created him from primordial matter and given him a noble countenance, the guardian senses, intellectual curiosity and understanding, and reason which formed him, a microcosm,

⁵⁸ Migne, cols. 432-39; Wright, pp. 431-444.

⁵⁹ Migne, 440A-D, Wright, pp. 445-7. The charioteer who conducts Natura to Alanus is of divine nature (col. 439D; p. 445).

⁶⁰ 442C; p. 450.

after the pattern of the universe.⁶¹ As Natura elaborates the idea, she reveals how she has established in man the same government as in the universe. In the cosmical state,⁶² God reigns. Everything is written in his book of Providence. Under Him the angels hold delegated power extended even to man. In this realm, God commands, the angel administers, and man serves. From the exposition, it is plain that Natura belongs to the host of angels. The view is confirmed by a comparison which she makes between her powers and God's.⁶³ She insists that she is His lowly disciple. Even from her He is aloof. His operation is simple, hers multiplex; His sufficient and wonderful, hers deficient and changeable; He could not be born, but she could be and was; He is the maker, she the made. A primal distinction between God and her lies in the mysterious rebirth of man. The matter is beyond her power, beyond reach of intellect. It can be comprehended only by Theologia.

The distinction recalls the distinction between Natura and Urania in *De Mundi Universitate*. Natura is there aloof from God, but serves him through Nous. Her control over man is physical; over the universe, it is confined to the lower spheres. Beyond and above her Urania has charge of souls and the celestial regions. The two supplement each other as Natura and Theologia do in *De Planctu Naturae*.⁶⁴

If Natura is of a lower order than God, she is above man, Genius, and Venus. Her attitude toward man is regretful. Her purpose in coming down to Alanus is to complain to him of human conduct and to have him teach man the penalty which she will invoke through Genius, her other self. In man is a conflict between reason and sensuality, a conflict in fact to be illustrated in later allegories from *Les Échecs Amoureux* in Old French and *Reason and Sensuality* in Lydgate to the English moralities *Nature*⁶⁵ and *The Marriage of Wit and Science*, four hundred years later. Alanus, by his long description of Natura and her powers, emphasizes the necessity of both the

⁶¹ 443B; p. 451.

⁶² 444A, B, C; pp. 452-3.

⁶³ 445, C, D; p. 455.

⁶⁴ See further for her power 447B-448A; p. 458.

⁶⁵ Cf. W. R. Mackenzie's *The English Moralities from the Point of View of Allegory*, Boston, 1914.

physical and the intellectual sides of the universe and of man, emphasizes the balance that should exist between the two.

Likewise he holds to the view that Natura is good, whereas man alone of the creatures does wrong. The symbolism of this apostasy is the rent⁶⁶ in that portion of Natura's garment which represents man,—a device taken from the similarly significant description of Philosophia's garment in Boethius' *Consolatio*.

Alanus, instead of relating the fall of man in Eden, employed classical figures⁶⁷ to explain how man had sinned. When Natura had taken up the work of shaping creatures on her anvils, she had to have assistants. Hence she placed at a distance from the peaceful palace of the eternal region, Venus with her husband Hymen and her son Cupid.⁶⁸ To her she gave hammers, forges, and a designer's pen, which should always write grammatically. But Venus wearied of regular life, and as a result led the way for the sensual sin of man. In these respects she is the Venus of the two traditions, the good and the evil. Furthermore, she represents the combination of reason and sensuality again; but in the long run, instead of being virtuous and reasonable like Natura, she stands for the vicious and lascivious.

Therefore for the punishment of man, it is necessary for the poet to introduce the character of Genius, who stands for the experienced morality of Natura.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ 452B, C; p. 467.

⁶⁷ The fact that Alanus used so many humanistic examples instead of Christian examples leads one to believe that his intentions were the same as Boethius. Acquainted though he was with church doctrines and literature and engaged in ecclesiastical affairs, nevertheless he preferred to state the same truths, the same principles, through the arguments of reason, as well as he was able. He held that reason would lead to the same goal. Moreover, he evidently delighted to take examples from classical story. The peculiarity of his so doing appears best by contrast with the writings of another wide reader, Jean de Meun. When he came to treat identical matters, Jean dropped many of the illustrations from Ovidian lore and substituted one or two from the Bible. Perhaps to modern taste, Alanus' choice is the more artificial; Scriptural stories have less the atmosphere of fiction. Moreover, classical myths were scarcely convincing examples to effect reform.

⁶⁸ 453D, 454A, B; p. 469; the figure of the forge is employed also in 456D, 457A, p. 475; 459C, p. 480.

⁶⁹ The discussion will occur elsewhere.

The same theme that dominates *De Planctu Naturae* is the starting-point of Alanus' other notable humanistic poem, *Anticlaudianus*,⁷⁰ namely, that man has fallen away from virtue and causes Natura to grieve over his disobedience to her laws. The title refers to Claudianus' satirical poem *In Rufinum*, which is about Rufinus, a villain whom the Vices made a monster and who endeavored to eject virtue from the world. Natura in *Anticlaudianus*, however, seeks the making of a good or perfect man who will be secure against the conspiracy of the Vices. In the prologue, Alanus said that there are four artificers: God, whose works are in mind, materia, form, and government; Natura, whose works admitted no corruption before Adam, but have been marred by corruption after him; Vice, whose work is depravation; and Fortune, whose works are prosperity and adversity. These four he calls the actors in the poem, or the active principles represented by the allegory.

Natura, sorrowing at the corruption of man, wishes that a perfect man might be created, and to forward the idea, calls the Virtues to council. Her beautiful home is surrounded without by woods and fountains, and within is adorned by pictures of worthies like Aristotle, Plato, Seneca, Cicero, and Virgil. After characteristic debate, the council decide to send Prudentia, or Phronesis, to God with their petition. To bear her, a chariot has to be built, and the Seven Arts employ themselves in the process, their several functions being explained at length. Finally the chariot sets off with Ratio (Reason) as charioteer driving the steeds of the Five Senses. What they see while traveling through the spheres is amply described in encyclopedic fashion. When they reach the firmament, the Senses cannot penetrate the secrets of heaven. But Theology consents to lead Prudence and Hearing to the place where a soul endowed with all the virtues can be obtained for the perfect man. Prudence is dazzled by the glory of the empyrean where the saints dwell, and accordingly the aid of Faith is secured. At last they reach the citadel of God. He grants Prudence's petition, for Mercy is above Justice. Upon receiving the perfect soul, Prudence returns to Natura. The Virtues and the Arts then assist Natura in making the perfect man of body and soul. Meanwhile Alecto and the Vices have plotted against the man, and they enter now into a great battle with the Virtues to gain their ends. But they are routed. The perfect man remains safe.⁷¹

In structure the poem has a better climax than has *De Planctu Naturae*. In turns of thought, however, there is less

⁷⁰ Migne, cols. 481-576; Wright, work cited, II, pp. 268-428. Cf. the Old French version discussed in *Bulletin de la Société des anciens textes*, 1895.

⁷¹ The resemblance of part of the plot to that of the Four Daughters of God is plain.

to please readers to-day. Though one thinks naturally that the perfect man may signify Christ, evidence indicates that he is an idealization, a Utopian character. In fact the presence of the Virgin and the saints in the empyrean precludes us from interpreting the perfect man as allegorically equivalent to the person of Christ.

Yet this Christian background which appears at times indicates a falling in with Bernardus Silvester rather than with Boethius; that is, the poet has no intention absolutely to exclude Christian elements, to confine his moral reasoning to classical ethics and philosophy. Nevertheless, the subjects of the activity of the Seven Arts and the conflict between Sins and Virtues are as humanistic as Christian; the method of allegory was common to profane and Christian writers.

The poem, though it adopts the celestial journey before the creation of a man from *De Mundi Universitate*, contrasts with the cante-fable in being less philosophic, less intermittently allegorical narrative in pattern. The situations are much more vivid and frequent, the symbolism is oftener evoked. Instead of complaining about Chaos, Natura sorrows over man's disobedience to her laws,—the same theme at the beginning as the whole argument of *De Planctu Naturae* embodies. She is associated in council with Virtues who supplement one another's functions. She is not described at length, but is provided with a pictorial background in that we have a considerable description of her "estate" and mansion.⁷²

Within her castle Natura is employed⁷³ in maintaining her laws and in providently devising statutes to be promulgated over the world. She tests the causes of things and the seeds of the universe. She redeems ancient chaos⁷⁴ from civil strife and by the principle of number unites its elements in bonds of peace. She looks upon the earthquakes, thunderbolts, storms. She observes the differences in the seasons and in the fixed

⁷² Cols. 489-90, I, iii-iv, p. 275 ff. Other descriptions are in Claudianus, Jean de Hauteville, Chaucer, Hawes. The usual devices do not dwell upon her abode, because she descends from above, as in *De Planctu* and *The Boke of the Howlat*, or meets the person or otherwise appears to him as in *Il Tesoretto* and the English moralities.

⁷³ Col. 492; I, v., pp. 278 ff.

⁷⁴ This passage should be compared with that on Natura's activities in *De Mundi Universitate*.

stations and properties of earth, water, air, and fire. Thus she resembles in her interests Physis in *De Mundi Universitate*. But Natura does not study medicinals, and she is further distinguished in the creative function; she acts like the principle of growth in the universe.

She has, moreover, the moral attitude of Natura in *De Planctu Naturae*. In language that recalls the description in Bernardus Silvester, she states man's proper office, and then deplores his conduct against her.⁷⁵ In accord with the Hebraic solution of evil in the world, she desires one man to redeem by his virtue the many.⁷⁶

Natura's relation to God is not brought out so clearly as in *De Planctu Naturae*. But she is evidently remote from him and subordinate to him. On the other hand, His powers and nature are quite as well defined in the prayer which the poet addresses to him, before he dares to describe Prudence's experiences in the empyrean.⁷⁷ This invocation is another of those abounding in terms for God like "highest parent, eternal God, living power, unique form of good," and so on. He is the efficient, formal, and final cause,—the last a touch of Aristotle.

To other characters of the allegory, that is, those with whom she has to do, Natura is superior, yet she requires much aid in making the perfect man. Her circle of associates has greatly increased, with the result that later allegories derived many suggestions.

When Prudence returns from heaven with the soul⁷⁸ prepared by Nous under God's approval, Natura furnishes the material for the body. In the joining of the two together, she is assisted by Concordica, Arithmetica, and Musica. Upon this new man the Arts and the Virtues bestow gifts. Those from Puditia and Modestia make him moderate in the enjoyment of the senses, restrained in speech, and chaste in conduct. Those from Ratio, as in cases from Horace on, enable him to distinguish between the true and the false, the honorable and the base; so that he is not to be swayed by popular report or hypocritical flattery. Those from Honestas cause him to

⁷⁵ Col. 943B; I, vi, pp. 280 ff.

⁷⁶ Col. 493B.

⁷⁷ Col. 534C, D, 535A; V, v, pp. 354 ff.

⁷⁸ Col. 548 B, C; VI, viii, pp. 379 ff.

avoid crime and vicious associations, and to be generous, but not prodigal. Sophia and Grammatica instruct him in their arts, as do Logica, Theologia, Pietas, Fides, and the rest.⁷⁹

Nobilitas, Fortuna's daughter, likewise wishes to contribute to the man's endowment, and goes to her mother to urge her. Fortuna, realizing that she is inferior to Natura, declares that the acts of Natura require no aid of hers; in the province of law chance has no part.⁸⁰ Nevertheless she will render what assistance she may. When she arrives she is helped by Ratio in the bestowal, lest one injury should vitiate the glory of many things. Her gifts are of small value in comparison with those of the virtues.⁸¹

Hence it will be observed that Alanus' emphasis is constantly on the virtuous quality of Natura's office. The end of the poem puts further stress on the point. After the fight following the desperate conspiracy of Alecto and the Vices,

. . . cedit juveni victoria, surgit
Virtus, succumbit Vitium, Natura triumphat.
Regnat Amor, nusquam Discordia, Foedus ubique.⁸²

VI

Whether Jean de Hauteville's partly realistic *Archithrenius* (1185)⁸³ was written after Alanus' allegories, I am uncertain. Its title gives the name of the hero, the "arch-weepers."

As the account proper begins, the young hero is introduced weeping over the weakness given him by Natura. Manfully he soon decides to seek her. On the way he passes the golden palace of Venus. Despite the admiration he conceives for the goddess's fair attendants and his interest in Cupid, who is clad in the contemporary gallant costume, Archithrenius moves on to a tavern where some young bloods are rioting. Gluttony does not long detain him, however, and with praise for sobriety in his heart, he goes to Paris to take up the life of a poor student at the university. Though the people are jolly and the situation of the city is fair, penury in an attic shortly induces him to attempt the Mount of Ambition, in the midst of fragrant gardens. But the court life does not satisfy him, nor does the presumption of ecclesiastics or their cupidity. Finally

⁷⁹ The influence of Martianus Capella's *De Nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii* is obvious.

⁸⁰ Col. 560C; VIII, ii, pp. 401 ff.

⁸¹ Col. 561D; VIII, ii.

⁸² 574A; IX, viii, p. 425.

⁸³ Wright, work cited, I, *Johannis de Altavilla Architrenius*, pp. 240-392; cf. *De Archithrenio*, J. Simler, Paris, 1871.

Archithrenius arrives at Thule, a country of eternal spring and happiness. There he finds about twenty Greek philosophers discussing the sins of wrath, envy, and so on. As Solon ceases speaking, the unhappy young man looks up, and beholds a beautiful lady in a flowery plain, surrounded by saintly old men as attendants. On learning that she is Natura, he casts himself at her feet. She, however, before listening to his plaint, discourses on natural philosophy—the world obedient to man, the heavens above with their planetary laws and the like. But at last she permits him to utter his woe. He wonders why, if she is so powerful, she has no remedy for him. Promising help, she indicates the evil of lust, and recommends his marriage with Moderantia. The wedding is pleasantly celebrated amid the accompaniment of music and the discourse of talking birds. (The poem closes with Jean de Hauteville's wish that his work should give him fame.)

The allegorical situation in the poem is different in some respects from that in *De Planctu Naturae*, where a man listens to a discourse by Natura. In this case, the man, mistaken though he is about Natura and unable to recognize her just as Alanus is, makes the journey for the purpose of complaint. As in *Consolatio Philosophiae*, he receives instruction and comfort. As in Alanus' poems, man in general is given up to vices of all sorts; and as they do, *Archithrenius* preaches the moral life through Natura. The allegory on the whole is a curious mixture of contemporary realism and picturesque, fantastic symbolism. It has the same preceptive and encyclopedic character as the works of Alanus and Bernardus Silvester.

Concerning Natura herself, her person and power, Jean de Hauteville is briefer than was Alanus. Philosophically, Natura is whatever is visible.⁸⁴ Her appearance when Archithrenius first sees her is treated by the poet in a generalizing manner, but at fair length.⁸⁵ Stately of gesture, she sits on her throne, a radiant and dignified figure, with the rosy countenance of a maid. At forges she constructs her work. She can alter the established course of things. As a teacher, she begins a long encyclopedic account of the heavens, not unlike that of what in *De Mundi Universitate*, Natura, Urania, and the soul saw, or that of what Prudence in *Anticlaudianus* saw. These celestial wonders so excited the admiration of Archithrenius that he asks why Natura can not aid him in his despondency over the wickedness of the world.⁸⁶ She promises help, and

⁸⁴ Wright, I, p. 248.

⁸⁵ Wright, pp. 369–70.

⁸⁶ Wright, pp. 382 ff.

like Natura in Alanus inveighs against man's conduct. Then she urges upon him marriage with Moderantia, the upshot of her lesson being that a man should be temperate, should observe the golden mean,⁸⁷ in fact the very moral, of Alanus when he correlated reason and sensuality in *De Planchu Naturae*.

These four great works of the twelfth century all have characteristics in common: a fondness for allegory and philosophy; respect for the ancient philosophers; an avidity for old mythology, understood presumably as allegorical; a humanistic interest in the classics, especially in works of a writer like Claudianus; and marked subordination of Biblical material or references, as if the authors treated virtue as independent of Christian revelation, and imitated the philosophy of Boethius. With the exception of *De Mundi Universitate*, the theme of all revolves round the evil conduct of man and the desire for a change therefrom. Man's sin is against Natura.⁸⁸

VII

With the opening of the thirteenth century subsided the allegorical use of Natura in Latin.⁸⁹ There was of course always some personification, but the exuberance of the Latin literary enthusiasm over the device had passed and only the regular philosophical definitions or the brief conventional formulae were used, even in the humanistic revival in Latin. The reasons for the change are not far to seek. At this time vernaculars were sufficiently stable for unlearned treatments, and even on occasion for more learned works. The thirteenth century saw the *Roman de la Rose* and a great number of Old

⁸⁷ Wright, pp. 385 ff.

⁸⁸ It should not be forgotten that at this time Bernard of Cluny wrote *De Contemptu Mundi*, a fiery book of reform, and Bernard of Clairvaux urged on the Crusaders.

⁸⁹ Two other poems belong to the preceding group. In the witty *Elegia de Diversitate Fortunae et Philosophiae Consolatione* (1191-2) by Henry of Settimello are references to Natura's power and law. The poet complains of his fortune and wonders why he is not in worse places where Natura might have put him (col. 846, ll. 103-4; p. 7). Later Phrenesis declares that he is unreasonable in his attitude toward Natura (col. 857, ll. 33 ff.; p. 23). The references are to Migne 204 and the Latin text with Italian translation, Firenze, 1730; those of the reprint of the Italian, Prato, 1841, pp. 27 and 57. The second poem is Henry of Milan's *De Controversia Hominis et Fortunae* (1259-1268); for information about this poem, I find in this country only Francke, work cited.

French poems, *Il Tesoretto* of Brunetto Latini and the poetry of the early Italians including some of Dante's, the German romance and Minne-songs, and the rise of Middle English into a competent literary vehicle. The fourteenth century completely established English. Accordingly, there remained so much the less occasion for the employment of Natura as an allegorical figure in Latin.

Moreover, a shift in emphasis came. The twelfth century was not only strongly moral, as I have pointed out, but it saw the range of possible efforts for reform by means of Latin. In the thirteenth century the vernacular could reach the public more directly, and it had sufficient fluidity and substance for the purpose. While then Old French could supplant Latin in its own admonitory office, it furnished a more intimate opportunity for the expanding interest in the phases of love. Though the relation of Natura to love and Venus had already been emphasized, the rather formal author usually shrank from too close sympathy with the emotions. Something was wanted nearer to the temper of the *Carmen Buranum*. The romantic poets of the thirteenth century did not fear to explore the psychological intricacies of love, and they assembled therefore a large body of allegorical figures to represent associated attitudes of mind. No squeamishness was felt in dwelling upon the vagaries of the passion. Hence it is that Natura at once retained her position as God's agent and became more intimate with the articles of Venus and Cupid.

In saying that Natura no longer appeared as a notable character in Latin literature, I do not imply that the allegories of Bernardus Silvester and Alanus ceased to exert influence. Quite the contrary; Bernardus and especially Alanus were *loci classici* for the tradition. Up to the sixteenth century, one never gets away from the use of Natura by Alanus in *De Planctu Naturae*, largely to be sure because of the variety of its literary appeal, but partly because of its substantial philosophical background in Platonism and its moral distinction between reason and sensuality.

The various encyclopedic accounts of the universe and the attempts to formulate philosophic systems to explain it, such as those of John the Scot and Thomas Aquinas, show that the reading public was interested in such matters and that its

curiosity was maintained throughout the period. Accordingly, when the school of Chartres arose, it grasped the literary device of allegory and the models Claudianus and Boethius in order to elaborate allegories of its own upon the four-fold aspect of the Chalcidian *Timaeus* of Plato. It began with the more closely scientific philosophy of *De Mundi Universitate*, and in almost no time had produced the highly literary and moral poems of Alanus, *De Planctu Naturae* and *Anticlaudianus*, and Jean de Hauteville's *Archithrenius*.

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